



Minutes of the
**Meeting of the
Executive Committee**
of the
World Council of Churches

12 - 15 February 1997

**Meeting held at
Kykkos Monastery, Cyprus**

EX/1/97

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World Council of Churches
EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETING

at Kykkos Monastery, Cyprus

12-15 February 1997

1. OPENING ACTIONS

A. Worship

Daily morning worship took place in a Chapel in Kykkos Monastery. The Orthodox liturgy was led each day by one of the Orthodox participants, and meditations were given by members of the Executive Committee.

B. Welcome

The Moderator, His Holiness Aram I, welcomed participants to this first meeting of a WCC Governing Body to take place not only in Cyprus but in the Middle East region. The presence of the Executive Committee in this place was a sign of our fellowship with the churches of Cyprus, in particular with the Church of Cyprus. Secondly, our presence was an expression of the commitment of the World Council of Churches to a just and peaceful solution of the conflict in Cyprus.

Reminding members that particular attention would be given at this meeting to the Common Understanding and Vision (CUV) process, the Moderator urged all those present to take an active part in the deliberations. It was time to bring an end to the period of uncertainty and confusion currently existing in the World Council by taking the necessary actions and decisions in a responsible way.

The Moderator extended a special welcome to Bishop Basil Karayannis of the Church of Cyprus and expressed gratitude on behalf of members of the Executive for the hospitality being offered to them at the Kykkos Monastery.

On behalf of His Beatitude Archbishop Chrysostomos of Cyprus, Bishop Karayannis welcomed participants to this historic Monastery. The Archbishop regretted he was unable to attend this opening session of the WCC Executive Committee but wished to affirm the commitment of the Church of Cyprus to the ecumenical movement and a deeper understanding between Christians.

Bishop Karayannis noted that the presence of the World Council of Churches in Cyprus at this critical time was of particular significance due to the unresolved problem of Cyprus. He asked participants to remember in their prayers the people of Cyprus who had suffered for so long as a result of the division of their country.

Cyprus had received the Christian faith very early on through the apostles Paul and Barnabas, and the Church felt a strong sense of responsibility to guarantee the continuation of the Christian faith in the country and to overcome the difficult situation that had existed during the past 23 years.

The Moderator assured Bishop Karayannis of the WCC's commitment to a just and peaceful solution to the problem of Cyprus.

C. Roll Call

The General Secretary called the roll, noting a number of apologies. The Moderator expressed regret at the absence of so many members. It was agreed to send messages of support and greeting to those who were unable to attend due to illness.

D. Minutes of Previous Meeting

The minutes of the meeting of 12-13 September 1996 were approved as circulated.

E. Adoption of Agenda and Timetable

The agenda and timetable were adopted as proposed.

2. REPORT OF THE GENERAL SECRETARY

Dr Raiser spoke of the main events that had taken place in the life of the World Council of Churches since the meeting of Central Committee in September 1996. This had been an intensive period of work, and considerable progress had been made. He had reduced his programme of visits to member churches in order to spend more time in Geneva, and with the exception of a visit in September to the President of the European Commission, Mr Jacques Santer, his travel had been confined to WCC-related meetings and conferences.

These included the World Mission Conference in Salvador de Bahia, Brazil (November/December 1996); a meeting hosted by the Moderator in Antelias, Lebanon (December 1996) which had the purpose of consulting on issues regarding the place and participation of Orthodox Churches in the life of the Council; and the enlarged Commission meeting of Unit III in Nairobi in January 1997 to report on the results of the Theology of Life study; this was followed by a visit to the member churches in Ethiopia. Finally, he had been to Hong Kong for a meeting with CCA, the last in the current round of consultations with REOs; an evaluation of these consultations would provide a basis for discussion at the next meeting of REO general secretaries in April 1997 in Quito, Ecuador.

Dr Raiser mentioned three events of particular note: the 50th anniversary of the Ecumenical Institute, Bossey in October 1996, which demonstrated the broad support Bossey has acquired among the local community. Secondly, ECLOF had also celebrated its jubilee, in November 1996, with wide participation of the Geneva community, especially from the banking world. Thirdly, in the framework of the mid-Decade team visits, an 11-person team had visited the Ecumenical Centre for a week during November; their report contained many important observations.

In Memoriam

Former staff colleague Rev. Dr Eugene Stockwell died in October 1996 after a long battle with cancer. Two former WCC Presidents, Archbishop Olof Sundby and Metropolitan Dr Paulos Mar Gregorios, died in December; Dr M.M. Thomas, a former moderator of Central Committee, also died in December. Dr Elisabeth Adler, who had served as a consultant to PCR, died in January 1997.

Follow-up to Central Committee, September 1996

The effort to engage the member churches in accepting some financial co-responsibility for the life of the Council had met with some positive response in the case of membership contributions and of subsidies for Central Committee members

attending meetings. The appeal for the staff re-structuring fund had however received little response, and the Finance Sub-committee had concluded that any future costs of this nature should be included in the budget, which would mean a reduction of the funding available to continue the Council's work.

Staff changes agreed on in September had been implemented by 1 January 1997. There was awareness among staff that further changes were to be anticipated, and an expectation that this meeting of the Executive would provide some clarity about this.

The Finance Strategy Group met in September and November, and had drawn up an action plan to ensure that the various tasks to be addressed were kept in perspective. This had helped structure the work done since September. The Management Team, comprising core General Secretariat staff plus the four Unit Directors, was a useful additional decision-making instrument to carry out some of the in-depth work that the SEG was not able to do.

Several reviews were underway to seek ways of improving various services in the house, including printing, telephone, fax, telecommunication services, etc. The results of these would be brought to Central Committee in September.

Work on Assembly preparations was continuing; some new staff groups had been formed and others reshaped in order to address the tasks to be done following the decisions of Central Committee on the basis of the APC report. A number of staff would visit Harare shortly to deal with communication, logistics, and other administrative matters.

In the brief discussion following the General Secretary's report, reference was made to the difficult situation in which the Ethiopian Orthodox Church currently finds itself. Dr Tolen asked whether the WCC could facilitate a meeting between the two factions within the EOC in a neutral place outside the country. This was seconded by Dr Tsetsis. It was agreed that this be considered along with other proposals. CCIA would continue to monitor the situation carefully and would keep the Officers informed of developments.

Ms Mendis had been a member of the Decade team visit to the World Council; she felt the visit had been very helpful and the group members had worked well together. They had felt challenged by the experience, and she looked forward to the results in terms of the implementation of their proposals.

3. TOWARDS A COMMON UNDERSTANDING AND VISION OF THE WORLD COUNCIL OF CHURCHES

The next four sessions were intended as "workshops on CUV", i.e. group discussions of the green CUV draft document, following up the work of the small group which had met prior to this meeting of the Executive Committee. Due to the fact that very few additional members were present who had not been part of the small group, it was decided to have this discussion in plenary. The last of the sessions concentrated on a document entitled "Internal Structural Implications of the CUV document".

Mr Marlin VanElderen, as editor of the green document, took notes at these sessions as well as during the small group meetings, and his aide-mémoire is reproduced here as a summary of the discussions.

Aide-Mémoire

Discussion of CUV document by Executive Committee small group and by the full Executive Committee

The sessions of the Executive Committee were preceded by a two-day meeting of the small group named by the Committee in September 1996 to provide oversight of the CUV process. Present were Prof. A. M. Aagaard, Bishop Boseto, Dr M. Kässmann, Fr L. Kishkovsky, Ms M. Mapanao, Ms B. Rantakari, Rev. E. Santana, Bishop Talbert, Dr A. Tolen and Bishop Zacharias (apologies from Ms M. Best), along with Dr K. Raiser, Ms M. A. Lundy and Mr M. VanElderen (*staff*). Several observations made in the ensuing "CUV workshop" involving the full Executive Committee are incorporated into this summary (specific drafting proposals will be passed on for consideration to the July meeting of the small group and are not recorded here).

1. Participants were invited to share echoes of CUV being heard in their own contexts. Some references were made to written responses already received; these (except those from unit commissions) were not discussed as such, though the dossier was made available. In addition to specific information from participants, two general points emerged:

a) Fr. Kishkovsky spoke of continuing “pan-Orthodox” and “inter-Orthodox” concerns about the WCC, crystallized in (but not limited to) the situation in the Russian Orthodox Church. The extent to which this reflects internal issues about which the WCC can do little, and the extent to which it highlights an ingrained Protestant “ethos” and “Protestant” approach to ecumenism in the WCC, were identified as matters for ongoing reflection.

b) Dr Tolen spoke of fundamental problems in animating a discussion of CUV among WCC member churches in Africa. Many remain caught in confessionalisms inherited from the missionaries; local concerns are overwhelming; the relatively few ecumenical meeting-goers equipped to follow this debate are unable to communicate it to others and can thus speak only for themselves as individuals. More evidently needs to be done to make clear in the churches that CUV issues are their issues as well, but the distance separating the WCC from its basic constituencies (not only in Africa) is once again apparent here.

2. There was agreement on the process up to the Central Committee meeting in September. Before the small group’s meeting (7-8 July) to approve a revised text (to be sent out by mid-July), staff will (1) work on encouraging responses especially from churches outside of Europe and North America, (2) prepare an initial classification of responses to enable the July meeting to focus on the most important areas needing revision or redrafting and (3) keep the small group informed.

3. It was agreed that initial reactions to CUV chapter 6 indicate that it would be premature for Central Committee in September to consider proposals for constitutional amendments. The maximum reasonable expectation is that Central Committee might agree that amendments are needed in certain areas and authorize the Executive Committee in February 1998 to prepare and propose these to member churches (this would fall within the six-month notification period, Constitution, Article VII). Subsequently, a consensus seemed to emerge that the two parts of the CUV document should be separated, both to make the document shorter and more coherent and to avoid the risk that responses focus disproportionately on structural issues and ignore the substantive affirmations of understanding and vision these are meant to incarnate. While there was general agreement that this applies to chapter 6, some want to retain at least parts of chapter 5 and chapter 7 together with chapters 1-4.

4. The small group decided to consider Parts I and II of the document chapter by chapter, then the Internal Structural Implications document, then the vision statement. In the end, the small group did not specifically address the vision

statement. During the full Executive Committee meeting some general comments were made about the need for vision, though specific suggestions about how such a vision might be articulated (or how it would differ from the Preamble to the Working Draft) were not forthcoming. It was noted that responses received so far (as well as those to the earlier draft) indicate that, while there is virtually universal agreement on the need for a “vision”, most people are clearer about what they do not want than about what they think ought to be there.

5. The points on which the small group focused in its chapter-by-chapter discussion of Part I were summarized in written form and presented to the full Executive Committee, whose discussion, with few exceptions, centred on these issues:

Chapter 1

paragraphs 1.4-1.8: Given space limitations and differences of interpretation of current events and recent history, some believe it is preferable to omit completely any survey of the context. If, on the other hand, such a survey is to be included (as most members seemed to think), does the present version give an adequate account of the church/ecumenical situation (achievements and failures) and of the world situation? It was noted in this connection that the document has both “educational” dimensions (which would allow for and indeed encourage acknowledgment of historic and continuing disagreements of interpretation in such an account of the context) and “policy-setting” dimensions (which should as far as possible be straightforward and unambiguous).

paragraph 1.13: Should the Toronto statement be more explicitly affirmed as well as merely cited here? It was noted that there are basic differences of understanding of the nature and status of the Toronto statement among member churches.

Chapter 2

paragraph 2.8: This formulation has elicited a fair degree of criticism, some apparently based on a misunderstanding of what it means to say about the “one ecumenical movement”. Some of that criticism might be met by moving this paragraph before para. 2.7, but not everyone is convinced about the use of “one ecumenical movement”, though neither in the small group nor in the full committee was the issue of “wider (i.e., beyond Christianity) ecumenism” raised.

paragraph 2.7 (subpoints). Some feel this list (based on the Unit I Committee report at the Central Committee) draws too heavily on the vocabulary and style of one ecumenical stream (definitional affirmations in the Faith and Order idiom).

Since *paragraph 2.7* draws largely on WCC discussions, the distinction between it and *paragraph 3.4* – and indeed between Chapter 2 and Chapter 3 as a whole – may not be clear enough.

Chapter 3

Overall: does the strategy of starting with the Basis and developing the idea of a "fellowship of churches" narrow too much the understanding that is articulated? During the general discussion, it was noted that the ambiguities of the term "church" call for careful drafting, especially in chapter 3 and in *paragraph 4.9* (in connection with the phrase "within and beyond the churches"). There was also a call for further reflection on the idea of "families of churches" (as opposed to an "atomistic" notion of member churches).

paragraph 3.15: Because this is a key paragraph in the entire document, it is necessary to be clear about the elements included, the distinction between "what the churches do" and "what the Council does" and, particularly, about the specification of "the primary purpose". This discussion inevitably continues in discussion of the Internal Structural Implications document.

Chapter 4

paragraph 4.9: Considerable reaction to this formulation suggests that (1) the language is not entirely clear; (2) the brevity of this paragraph is disproportionate to the parts of the chapter treating other ecumenical partners; (3) there are in fact "ecclesiological" differences among WCC members on this issue.

paragraph 4.10: The objections to this paragraph seem to parallel the objections to para. 2.8; again, the issue may in part be one of unclarity in the text, but there are also evident differences of understanding and conviction on this point

Chapter 5

There is a sense that in its present form this chapter does not adequately serve the purpose of building a bridge between the understanding and vision in chs 1-4 and the structural proposals that follow (i.e., it does not fully demonstrate the *need* for

structural changes). At the same time, it was said that the chapter includes useful guidelines which should not be lost.

6. Substantive discussion of Part II of the document focused on the five proposals made for (1) new-style Central and Executive Committees; (2) a single "programme commission" (continued in the Internal Structural Implications discussion); (3) the "heads of churches" meeting; (4) the forum; (5) the "new assembly" or "no assembly" proposal.

a) There seemed to be general agreement that the "no assembly" proposal will not fly; if so, there is little point to paragraphs 6.16-6.19 (about which many are quite sceptical in any case).

b) Some criticism of "assemblies" are in fact criticisms of Canberra; and these have been taken on board by the Assembly Planning Committee in preparing for Harare.

c) Some members urged further reflection on the new concepts for Central and Executive Committees (though practical questions were also raised) on the ground that the present system is dysfunctional, spends too much time on routine and does not give member churches the sense of having a voice in the governance of the WCC and thus works against their "ownership" of it.

d) There was general support for the forum idea, but a number of comments as well (indispensability of Roman Catholic participation; considerations of expense; need to avoid re-creating in the forum the very defects that have been spotted in Assemblies; possibility of eliminating world conferences as a way of saving money for forum events).

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The Programme Sub-committee took up the issue of CUV. At a later session, Ms Ritchie presented the Sub-committee's report and the Executive Committee noted the following observations:

After considering previous substantive discussion on the CUV document and on the document *Internal Structural Implications of the CUV Document*, the Sub-Committee **proposed**, and the Executive Committee **agreed**:

a) *that the current CUV document, with the proposed changes, be divided finally into two documents: chapters 1-4 and 7 be viewed as the main policy*

document; and that chapters 5 and 6 be treated separately as an implementing document;

b) that these two documents be referred to the Sub-Group on CUV of the Executive Committee for review and submission to the Central Committee for action.

The Sub-committee further **affirmed** the direction of the document on Internal Structural Implications of the Common Understanding and Vision Document, and **recommended** that, with the proposed changes, it be revised and further elaborated on the basis of principles already affirmed for forwarding to the Executive Committee in September 1997 with a view to bringing these changes to the Central Committee.

The Executive Committee **agreed**.

In response to a question as to why the document should be divided into two parts, it was pointed out that Part II was still preliminary, and the proposals regarding governing structures needed more time for deliberation before any decision could be taken. It was important to focus on Part I which contained items requiring constitutional change and which must therefore be approved by Central Committee.

Ms Santana stressed that in separating the paper into two parts, care must be exercised to include in Part II the various affirmations in Part I which acknowledged the wide variety of cultures and theological traditions of the WCC constituency.

4. INTERIM REPORT ON ASSEMBLY PREPARATIONS

Dr Ariarajah reminded the Executive that the APC reports directly to Central Committee and for this reason there was no formal written report to this meeting. The main task of the Executive Committee in relation to the assembly would be to approve the lists of those attending the assembly as advisers, observers, delegated observers and special guests. The first lists would be brought to the Executive in September 1997.

To date, 123 churches had named 414 delegates; 36% of those named were women, 11% youth; 46% lay, 53% ordained. A reminder was being sent to those who had not yet responded.

Regarding the **50th anniversary celebration**, the APC was recommending that a number of special guests be invited, including participants in the first Assembly in Amsterdam, past WCC Presidents and Officers, past general secretaries, heads of churches, and staff who had served the Council for a long period.

A group of staff would visit Harare shortly to deal with logistics, communication related matters, computer services, etc, and would report to the APC on the state of local arrangements. A draft programme had been drawn up, and staff teams were working on the various aspects of assembly preparation.

The Assembly Planning Committee would meet in May/June, and the Assembly Worship Committee would meet in September, after the Central Committee meeting.

Some discussion followed with regard to the **Hearings**. Dr Ariarajah explained that staff wished to bring a slightly different proposal to the APC from what was agreed by Central Committee in September 1996. There being a constitutional mandate to report to delegates on the work done during the period since the previous assembly, staff felt it would be better to organise the Hearings on the basis of major themes. Eight sessions would be devoted to Hearings, and it was proposed that the first four would provide opportunity for each Unit to give an account of its past work; the second series of four sessions would be more thematic and deal with some of the major themes dealt with over the period. Out of the discussion taking place in these sessions, some guidelines for future work should emerge.

Dr Kässmann noted that the Unit III Commission had expressed concern that no written report on the period Canberra to Harare was envisaged; they did not feel that the proposed popular brochure would be adequate. Dr Ariarajah said that the APC had discussed the matter and were proposing that the substantive report on work done by Units and Offices should be included as appendices to the Assembly Report that would be produced following the Assembly.

Ms Rantakari stressed the need for clarity regarding the financial responsibility of the WCC and that of the local office in Harare vis-à-vis the budget. Secondly, she urged that different methodologies be used to animate the Plenaries and Hearings, taking into account the African context.

Prof. Aagaard was not happy with the staff proposal and urged that the original decision by CC be maintained. She saw the Hearings as an opportunity for delegates to learn more about the Council's work and to familiarise themselves with the main themes on its agenda. It would be difficult to limit discussions in the Hearings.

Regional preparatory meetings would take place in 1998; the dates and details for these would only be fixed once all delegates had been named.

The Moderator wondered whether the 50th anniversary celebration might be combined with the closing worship of the assembly. Dr Ariarajah responded that the APC had in mind that the act of re-commitment take place on the Sunday during the assembly so that member churches could observe the occasion also.

Dr Nababan suggested that a way to stimulate people's imagination might be to focus on a burning issue that everyone was aware of, on which the assembly might speak. Mr Kobia said that the recent meeting of Unit III Commission had looked at some such possibilities; two suggestions were a) to call for a remission of debts, and b) in view of the Programme to Overcome Violence and its current focus on "Peace to the City", to have a point where we say "stop the world at the assembly!" for one minute, and to dramatise what violence is doing to people all over the world.

Dr Tolen pointed to the fact that, with the variety of activities available during an assembly, people would be obliged to choose what they do at every point; but we should avoid having too large a "menu" to select from, otherwise the assembly would be blamed for not focusing sufficiently on a few specific issues.

The Moderator expressed concern about the need to generate enthusiasm for the assembly, both in the churches and among staff. The programme and activities offered must be attractive enough to make people want to be involved.

Dr Tsetsis saw the assembly as a unique occasion for a new commitment to preach the gospel to the world. If we really believe that in Christ all things become new, it is our responsibility to say this clearly to the world.

Ms Santana called for greater integration between all the different strands that were part of the assembly; she felt the importance of linking today's world to the theme rather than sticking to one issue. We must affirm participation and inclusiveness, in our struggle to be together.

Dr Ariarajah affirmed that the comments made would be shared with the APC.

5. PUBLIC ISSUES

Rev. Dwain Epps introduced a background note on public issues, noting that the Horn of Africa (in particular Sudan and Ethiopia), the Great Lakes Region, and Nigeria had continued to be at the centre of the Council's work on international affairs in recent months. Events in these areas continued to be carefully monitored.

Sudan - Following the delegation visit by the Sudan Council of Churches to the MECC, the SCC chairman had written asking that the Executive Committee take action on the Sudan. In light of the proximity of the next meeting of the Sudan Ecumenical Forum, it was suggested that this request be taken up there. The situation remained delicate and staff continued to monitor it in close consultation with specialists in Nairobi and in the Sudanese churches.

Ethiopia - The situation was still extremely delicate, with increasing ethnic and regional tensions. The possibility of negotiation was slim but close contact was maintained, with an eye to taking advantage of eventual openings.

Responding to a question, Mr Epps noted that much of the WCC's capacity to respond to a conflict depended on the actions of the member churches on the spot. Conversations had taken place with the two Ethiopian member churches recently, to help them see their role in Ethiopian society as a whole. The constitution of Ethiopia, with its federal framework, provides formally for participation of all ethnic groups and regions. From the perspective of many, however, the country was being governed in a way which effectively excluded them. Few of the parties seemed prepared at the moment to negotiate their differences.

Great Lakes - A statement had been issued recently regarding the situation in Eastern Zaire and calling for provision of humanitarian assistance to the civilian populations there. The appointment of Ambassador Mahammed Sahnoun was a hopeful sign; it was innovative and noteworthy that he would report to the Secretaries General of both the OAU and the UN.

Mr Kobia had attended a meeting of church leaders from the Great Lakes region in Johannesburg in December 1996. It had proved impossible to get full attendance for a meeting in any of the countries directly concerned. An attempt was made to look at root causes of violence and insecurity in the region; church leaders agreed that regional solutions should be sought. The importance of the role of the church was

emphasised; church leaders of Burundi, Rwanda and Zaire would visit other churches and NCCs would be responsible for organising these pastoral visits.

Ms Blyth spoke of the cooperation taking place at different levels: besides a regional approach there were national approaches, and both provide important entry points. Through ACT attempts were being made to bring them together. But the situation was extremely complicated and often ambivalent.

Reference was made to the courage and dedication of workers in situations of conflict. Mr Epps noted that there had been a dramatic change in the last twelve months with regard to the security of international aid workers. This dangerous trend merited serious attention, because it meant that humanitarian work was impaired or even blocked in several situations around the world.

Mr Epps referred to a recent staff visit to Zaire where the church situation was also very delicate, in the midst of the enormous difficulties facing society as a whole. Of particular concern was the increasing number of professional mercenaries in the country and the seemingly endless supply of arms available.

Nigeria - Mr Kobia referred to the report *Ogoni - The Struggle Continues* that had been shared with members of the Executive. The report was prepared after a visit to Ogoniland jointly organised by the WCC and the AACC - a very significant visit. Ogoniland is a closed area, rarely visited except by government representatives. This was first time that an international NGO delegation had gone there to express solidarity with the Ogoni people and to seek to understand their plight. The people had asked that their story be told as widely as possible. The report had received wide media publicity and had been welcomed in many circles.

Responding to a question about why Ogoniland had been selected when the problem of Nigeria was much wider, Mr Kobia pointed out that Ogoniland had been singled out for oppression by the Government in a way that was not the case elsewhere.

Cuba - Mr Epps noted that the statement by Central Committee in September 1996 was warmly received in Cuba and more widely. The US had since taken steps not to implement parts of the Helms-Burton Amendment.

Guatemala - Thanks were expressed to Rev. Eunice Santana who had represented the WCC at the recent signing of the peace treaty in Guatemala City.

Iran - In response to a question, Mr Epps spoke about an "International Symposium

on Religion and the Contemporary World" in which an eleven-person WCC delegation participated in Teheran in December 1996. The WCC delegation was received at a high level by Muslim leaders, and the dialogue that took place was mutually enriching. Recognition was given to the existence of Christian churches in Iran, and the Symposium provided opportunity to visit the member churches and meet privately with their leadership. This was an important step toward improved relationships.

Cyprus - It was proposed that a statement be made by this Executive Committee. Mr Epps described the history of mediation efforts by the UN over the years: a number of resolutions had been adopted but without result. He also gave a brief history of ecumenical policy on Cyprus since 1974.

External powers were responsible for many of the problems, but it would be wrong to place all the blame on them. The leaders of both Cypriot communities have been unable to move from informal agreements to the implementation of steps which would lower tensions and bring a negotiated solution closer. The UN Security Council had highlighted the importance of bi-communal citizens' initiatives to try and find a way through the stalemate. These efforts were small but encouraging and their importance should not be under-estimated.

Metropolitan Chrysanthos described the effect that the situation was having on the people - the demographic character of the country had been changed. Many people were displaced and could not go back to their homes in the occupied territory; many churches had been taken over for other use, the icons stolen. He was concerned that there did not appear to be any solution - yet a solution must be found soon. The Greek and Turkish communities had lived together in peace for years; surely they could do so again. Meanwhile the Church of Cyprus was caring for refugees and doing humanitarian work. Any help that the Executive Committee could offer in terms of calling for urgent international action would be appreciated by the people of Cyprus.

The matter was referred to the Programme Sub-committee.

At a later session, Ms Ritchie reported that the Programme Sub-committee had considered the draft statement which took into account the earlier Executive Committee discussion and consultations with representatives of the Church of Cyprus. The Sub-committee expressed appreciation for the draft and forwarded the text to the Executive Committee for adoption.

In discussion, several amendments were proposed and accepted. The statement was approved as follows:

STATEMENT ON THE SITUATION IN CYPRUS

The Executive Committee of the World Council of Churches, meeting in Cyprus, 12-15 February 1997,

Expresses its deep concern that after twenty-three years of division of the island there is still no lasting political settlement, and

Believes that the continuation of the status quo is unacceptable; it violates the sovereignty and unity of Cyprus, the fundamental human rights of its people, and poses wider threats to their security and to peace and stability in the wider region.

The Executive Committee therefore:

Recalls and reaffirms its earlier resolutions on Cyprus and those adopted by the WCC Central Committee and Assembly by which the Council:

- strongly disapproved of the 1974 invasion of Cyprus by Turkish military forces;
- lamented the non-compliance of the parties with repeated resolutions of the United Nations Security Council and General Assembly calling for a cease-fire, the withdrawal of all foreign forces, and good-faith negotiations between the Greek and Turkish communities in Cyprus under the auspices of the Secretary-General;
- expressed the conviction that such negotiations be conducted freely and on the basis of equality with a view to reaching an acceptable agreement based on the fundamental rights of both Cypriot communities;
- lamented the displacement of persons from their homes, called for the early and safe return of all refugees and displaced persons, and appealed to the parties not to use such vulnerable populations as pawns in negotiations nor as objects of political exploitation;

- condemned the massive settlement on the island of mainland Turkish citizens with the intention of changing radically the demography of Cyprus;
- called for due respect of religious and sacred places in the island, and for protection of the sanctity, identity and integrity of places of worship;

The Executive Committee further:

Expresses grave concern at the heightened tensions in Cyprus and the surrounding region;

Expresses dismay that negotiations between the leaders of the Greek and Turkish Cypriot communities remain deadlocked;

Deplores the recent acts of violence along the buffer zone and mourns the tragic deaths which occurred there;

Laments the escalation of armaments and threats to use military force which further incite fear, insecurity and tensions between the two communities, and threatens the independence and territorial integrity of Cyprus;

Calls upon all parties to abstain from the use of provocative language or actions which would increase mistrust and breed animosity between the two communities;

Reaffirms its support to the Secretary-General of the United Nations in the exercise of his good offices to obtain a comprehensive negotiated settlement of the Cyprus conflict, and urges all states concerned to cooperate with and strengthen these efforts;

Believes that the forthcoming accession negotiations between the European Union and Cyprus could benefit both Cypriot communities and help create a positive atmosphere for a just, peaceful settlement of the problem of Cyprus;

Affirms its conviction that a settlement must assure the independence, sovereignty, territorial integrity and unity of the island and all its people, and should be reached by the people of Cyprus, free of outside geopolitical interests and without foreign interference;

Warmly welcomes civil society initiatives to reestablish or strengthen contacts and

mutual confidence between the Greek and Turkish Cypriot communities to promote peace and reconciliation;

Encourages and supports such bi-communal efforts as an important contribution to breaking the present status quo and placing the people of Cyprus at the heart of efforts to shape their common future, to restore relations and promote a peaceful settlement;

Regrets the obstacles placed in the way of these efforts, and calls insistently on all competent authorities, especially the Turkish Cypriot leadership, to lift all impediments to such contacts;

Encourages all the religious communities of Cyprus to support these efforts;

Firmly believes that the Church has a special obligation and contribution to make to instill tolerance, a generosity of spirit in society and respect for fundamental principles of human rights, and to guide the people of Cyprus in the paths of justice, peace and national reconciliation;

Urges WCC member churches around the world to encourage and accompany the Church of Cyprus as it seeks to be faithful to Jesus Christ, the Prince of Peace, and to press on their own governments and the United Nations the urgent need to give high priority to a prompt negotiated solution to the Cyprus problem.

Calls on the WCC, through its international affairs staff (CCIA) to continue to monitor closely the situation in Cyprus and, in cooperation with the Church of Cyprus, to seek opportunities to promote the implementation of this statement in the context of the Programme to Overcome Violence.

6. PROGRAMME COORDINATION

Ms Mary Ann Lundy presented a progress report describing what had been achieved so far in relation to the evaluation and planning process, and introducing the tools and schedule developed for use by programme entities. The information gained would become the basis for the report on the work of the past seven years and for Unit Hearings at the Assembly. The situation was made more complicated because many processes were going on simultaneously; also, each Unit had its own structure, programmes and funding process. The Staff Management Team was encountering

an additional complication in that the evaluation had to fit into the assembly process. 1998 would be a transition year. A series of forms had been drawn up to facilitate the assessment of unit activities; criteria for renewal of staff; and programme planning for 1999 and beyond in light of CUV.

The Unit Directors were invited to report on their respective Unit's progress on the programme evaluation and prioritizing process.

Unit I - Fr Thomas FitzGerald indicated that the Unit was making every effort to save costs, and had decided what the priorities of the Unit should be for the next period. Plans for 1997 included the following:

The stream on Worship and Spirituality was organising a Worship workshop in Taiwan in February, a consultation together with Faith and Order on a Common Date of Easter in March in Aleppo, Syria, and a consultation on Spirituality in June. The stream on Lay Participation towards Inclusive Community was preparing a global consultation on "Laos - The People of God" in Geneva in May. A course on conflict resolution in the churches in Indonesia was being organised by ETE, and they were continuing follow-up work on the Oslo global meeting of 1996.

The stream on Faith and Order held a consultation on baptism in January following their Board Meeting; a series of other consultations was planned - including one on theology and human rights (with WARC and LWF); on Episcopé-Episcopacy in April in Strasbourg; a Bilateral Forum "Emerging Visions of Unity" with Christian World Communion in May; as well as consultations on Hermeneutics and ecclesiology/conciliarity. Along with Units II and III a consultation was planned on Ethnic Identity, National Identity and the Unity of the Church, and another with Unit III on Theology and Violence.

Unit II - Rev. Ana Langerak affirmed that Unit II had also been readjusting and adapting to the current situation. A number of staff had left and not been replaced, obliging the Unit to change its foci. 1996 had been a particularly difficult year since it included the World Mission Conference, the conclusion of the AIDS study, and the culmination of the Gospel and Cultures study, among other tasks, while reducing staff and budget; this affected the Health team and URM in particular. The foci were limited to Gospel and Cultures, preparations for the World Mission Conference, and Christian education in Central and Eastern Europe. Education was perceived to be a perspective of mission, as was health.

A meeting was planned in late February to look at the WCC's role in the area of

health; another was planned in June to share the outcome of the Gospel and Cultures study, and the results of the World Mission Conference (see report p.23ff). Meanwhile the Unit had begun the process of follow-up and evaluation of the World Conference and of the Gospel and Cultures study, including on-going work in this area.

Unit III - Rev. Sam Kobia spoke of the different stages the Unit had gone through since 1992. It began with five staff teams with their own traditions, networks and funds, but the Commission recognised the need to achieve some cohesion, and steps were taken towards a process of integration. This resulted in five themes, which meant integrating budgets into one Unit programme budget, as well as reorganisation of the Unit's administration. Since September 1996, one staff team was working on the five themes, approaching justice, peace and creation jointly.

The Sokoni conference in January 1997 saw the completion of the 23 contextual case studies on the 10 Affirmations of Life (JPIC) (see report p.26ff). The report of the Mid-Decade Team Visits had also been completed; this would clearly have important implications for the self-understanding of the WCC.

The Peace to the City Campaign had been further developed in the context of the Programme to Overcome Violence. Prior to the Conference on World Mission and Evangelism the Indigenous Peoples Programme held a pre-conference consultation on Indigenous Spirituality in Salvador, Brazil, with 140 Indigenous participants.

Inter-unit cooperation between Units III and IV continued to grow and deepen. Joint planning and implementation of the work on the Great Lakes Region has proven to be effective and efficient. The second and third phases of the series on the training programme Caretakers of the Earth had taken place in cooperation with Unit II, involving grassroots educators.

Unit IV - Rev. Myra Blyth said that the process of evaluation was welcomed and staff were making every effort to prepare themselves for changing structures. The various desks were trying to consider the implications for their work in light of where CUV was leading; they had worked out a timeline for evaluation and preparation of the report on the past seven years' work, to be ready in draft form to share with the Commission at its meeting in May. A major question was: in what way had the work done by the Unit enabled the churches to carry on their diaconal task?

The Unit's Information Management Systems Development Team was continuing its review of unit systems with a view to developing more effective systems for sharing.

Programme highlights would include the Year of the Uprooted - 1997 - to be launched on 4 March 1997 in Geneva. Gender guidelines were being given special attention, especially in the regions. To implement capacity building and empowerment, regional and sub-regional workshops had been held around specific needs. Plans were in hand for a second Bossey seminar with agencies around ecumenical formation. The Children's Network was facilitating exchanges between children across regions and plans were being laid for a children's festival in Brazil. The campaign to ban landmines had had strong participation, with churches in over 40 countries sending more than 15,000 signatures to the WCC.

Discussion

Ms Rantakari asked about the possibility of an evaluation of the work done by the Executive Committee during its period of service: What legacy would the Executive wish to leave with its successors? What had this Executive seen taking place since Canberra 1991? She asked that this question be discussed in the Programme Subcommittee.

In response to a question about the various forms that had been drafted to elicit information about programmes and to help in their evaluation, Ms Lundy explained that it was important to obtain this kind of data in order to assess the value of the various programmes in comparison with each other; also in order to discover the strengths and weaknesses of programmes.

The Moderator noted that the CUV process, internal structures and programme coordination were inter-related: one conditioned the other. Was that inter-relatedness clear to staff? Ms Lundy affirmed that it was, but stressed that it was important not to become too bound to the structural implications until there had been more time to consider them and work them through. Questions were arising such as: does programme create structures? do structures emerge from programmes? The feeling was that programmes should influence the structure.

The General Secretary pointed out that this was the first time an orderly process of evaluating the Council's work had been tried. Many efforts at programme coordination had been made in the past but not in such a way that those responsible for implementing programme also did an evaluation of their work. He felt that this fact should be acknowledged by the Executive. The Council had been urged to find ongoing processes of self-evaluation, and there was a proposal that any future structure should provide for an office whose main mandate would be to implement such a process.

From his perspective, Dr Raiser believed that one of the essential changes to be accomplished was the attitude with which we approach our work: to shift from implementing mandates set in an institutional way to an attitude that is governed by tasks to be done and by budgets. Then it would be possible to judge when a task had been completed, what the obstacles had been, and so on.

The matter was referred to the Programme Sub-committee.

At a later session Ms Ritchie presented the Sub-committee's report, which was noted by the Executive Committee, as follows:

The Sub-committee received with appreciation the document and the process of evaluation and planning which was being put into a systematic form for the first time. Following the discussion in plenary, the Sub-committee took seriously the suggestion that there also be an evaluation process developed for the governing bodies. It was decided that a session of the next Executive Committee meeting be set aside for a discussion on the style of work of this body. Regarding the Central Committee, it was decided that three or so evaluation questions be sent from the Officers with preparatory papers for the next meeting of the Central Committee for assessment of their experiences.

In response to a question as to who would conduct such an evaluation of the governing bodies, Ms Rantakari felt Central Committee should be given an opportunity to express itself, but the process should be kept simple. A questionnaire could be sent out and the results passed on to the post-Harare Central Committee. This was **agreed**.

Several suggestions had been made in the Programme Sub-committee for evaluating the working style of the governing bodies. It was **agreed** that one session of the next meeting of the Executive Committee be reserved for such a discussion.

7. PROGRAMME MATTERS

A. Conference on World Mission and Evangelism, Salvador, Bahia, Brazil, 24 November - 3 December 1996

Ms Langerak shared a written report together with the Conference Message and Acts of Commitment, and a number of photographs taken during the event. This eleventh World Conference on Mission and Evangelism (CWME), under the theme *Called*

to One Hope - The Gospel in Diverse Cultures, drew over 600 participants from over 80 countries and a multiplicity of cultures for an intensive encounter and exchange of the inter-relation between gospel and culture. It was here that the world-wide study process on Gospel and Cultures came to a nodal point. The preparatory materials had taken up vital perspectives and questions coming from this study.

The daily Bible studies and morning worship were greatly appreciated by participants, and were always well attended. Plenary sessions, developing the conference theme, included presentations by Metropolitan Kirill of Smolensk and Dr Musimbi Kanyoro, from Tanzania. At a session that considered ways of strengthening the WCC's constitutional commitment to mission, Rev. Dr Lesslie Newbigin reminded participants that the gospel is the most important fact in the world which the church is obliged to pass on.

The main work of the Conference took place in four sections, each exploring the main theme from a different angle. Section I made the relation between culture, religion and the gospel its central focus: What is a proper theological understanding of culture? It affirmed the San Antonio (1989) formulation on the nature of God's relation to all religions and the churches' vocation to point to Christ.

Section II focused on societal relations inside cultures. What role does the gospel play in building communities, and forming relationships between groups and peoples in a broader context? Section III examined the role of local congregations in the proclamation and embodiment of the Gospel, while Section IV dealt with the question of mission in unity. The need for the gospel to be rooted in the cultures of people and the need to share its power and hope were strongly affirmed.

The Conference issued a Message, and participants made ten Acts of Commitment. Follow up work on Gospel and Cultures was identified. The official report of the Conference was currently being prepared. The initial assessment of the outcome of the Conference was generally positive, and a number of important processes were set in motion or strengthened, including a renewed or new interest in issues of gospel and culture in churches around the world. The Ecumenical Statement on Mission received significant input; this text would come to Central Committee in September, as would a paper on Proselytism and Common Witness.

Speaking as a participant in the Conference, Dr Tolen said he had felt a greater willingness to talk openly about a wide variety of issues, which had not been the case in San Antonio. He believed a new relationship with the African diaspora had been started, through the recognition of complicity in the slave trade.

Fr Alfeyev had been a member of the Message Committee: he believed the Message was an inspiring text reflecting almost all the voices heard during the conference. Fr Sauca felt that the worship had been particularly meaningful and demonstrated that it was possible to find ways of sharing through worship apart from the Eucharist. It was generally felt that the preparatory documents were better than the section reports, but they were acceptable to both the Orthodox and the Evangelicals who did not feel it necessary to produce separate statements this time.

Fr Kishkovsky referred to Metropolitan Kirill's presentation in which he gave an assessment of proselytism in the context of post-Soviet reality - showing proselytism not so much as a religious but as a cultural dynamic. The form it was taking was culturally aggressive. In his view the content of the conference was good, but some younger members of the Russian Orthodox Church had reported negatively because of some lobbying efforts for a debate on the homosexual theme.

The Conference challenged the Orthodox, for, while it was appropriate to be sensitive to syncretism as something capable of diminishing the gospel message, Orthodox had a history of constructive engagement with a variety of cultures in the context of mission.

Fr Alfeyev stressed the importance of Metropolitan Kirill's point about evangelism of culture as opposed to inculturation of the gospel. Russian culture had initially been pagan but was gradually christianised, and culture became a bearer of Christian witness. This idea might be developed further in the WCC.

Secondly, he agreed with Fr Kishkovsky that the debate on homosexuality had left a negative impression on some Russian Orthodox delegates. While some delegates were accustomed to this issue being discussed in WCC circles, he feared that those from more conservative circles, who would be delegates at Harare, would be adversely affected if such a debate took place there; this could lead to their promoting the idea that the ROC withdraw from the WCC. He asked that such debate take place only in the Executive Committee.

Dr Tsetsis had the impression that the Conference had offered plenty of opportunity for prayer, fellowship and renewed commitment to spread the gospel. Proselytism was deeply affecting many churches and he wondered whether a programme to combat this might be included in the Council's work after Harare.

Regarding the Mission statement, Fr Sauca explained the background: In 1994 the Working Group on Mission and Evangelism asked for a new statement, so efforts

were made to gather documents and texts from all over the world, and a draft text was produced. When this was shared with delegates at Salvador, many asked why a new statement was needed since they believed the 1982 text to be still valid: it was in fact a missiological statement, dealing with the theology of mission, not a contextual document. What was needed now was a text that would help people implement the missionary task in the light of new realities such as globalisation, tribalism, indigenous spiritualities. It was thus no longer a question of a new statement on mission, but of a down-to-earth missionary document.

Ms Rantakari had heard positive reports on the Conference both from the Tanzanian delegates and from those in the Nordic countries. She proposed that the Gospel and Culture booklet on Zimbabwe be shared with all delegates to the Harare Assembly.

Ms Santana was encouraged to hear about the impact of the Brazilian churches and she stressed the importance of involving people in local churches already at the preparatory stage of such meetings to enable them to become involved in the issues rather than just helping with the logistics.

The report was referred to the Programme Sub-committee.

At a later session, Ms Ritchie presented the report of the Programme Sub-committee, and the Executive Committee took note of the following points:

The Sub-Committee commended Unit II for the success of the World Conference on Mission and Evangelism as well as for the presentation by Rev. Ana Langerak on the Conference, held in Salvador, Bahia, Brazil, 24 November - 3 December 1996.

The Sub-Committee heard the request from the World Mission Conference in plenary to establish a Board on Mission and Evangelism.

Likewise, the Sub-Committee received a similar request from the Unit II Commission to create a Board on Education.

The Sub-Committee referred these two actions to the CUV Internal Structures sub-group of the Executive Committee in order that it might be considered in the light of the number of boards possible and necessary.

B. Report on the "Sokoni" Conference

Unit III Commission meeting, Nairobi, Kenya, January 1997

Dr Margot Kässmann, moderator of Unit III Commission, together with Rev. Sam Kobia and Ms Aruna Gnanadason, gave a presentation to Executive Committee members and staff who sat round an exhibition of photographs highlighting various aspects of the event.

The Commission had decided to take up the Theology of Life programme which had involved 23 case studies done over a two-year period. In order to receive the fruits of these case studies it was decided to use the African concept of "sokoni" meaning market-place, or open space: it is more than a place where people come to exchange goods but rather a place for communication, to receive information, to pass messages. Thus, seven smaller huts were built around a larger central hut (used for plenaries); each hut had a name: justice, creation, power, women, and so on.

Dr Kässmann described participants as an inclusive community - including people from the grassroots as well as commissioners and staff and others involved. The open space was good for meeting - everyone was part of the circle. There was much listening to stories of others, crying with them for the street children, the refugee women from Sudan - but the community was able to share and accept the emotion.

Presentations using a variety of creative dance, poetry - were made on various programmes of the Unit, the challenges, the issues being wrestled with. One of the most powerful presentations was by women and children, and by young people.

Ms Gnanadason spoke of the Sudanese refugee women who through their tears brought out the deep commitment of women to peace. Perhaps the reason there was no peace was that women were not among those at the negotiating tables.

Reference was made to the destruction of the environment carried out by organisations such as Shell International Ltd, on which several videos were available.

In discussion, Ms Rantakari urged that further work be done on the issue of women's role in peace-making processes. It was currently an issue in parts of East Africa and could be an element for the Harare Assembly.

Bishop Talbert felt that a burning issue for the Assembly might be mobilising a boycott against Shell International Ltd. Dr Kässmann noted that the Unit III

Commission was anxious to collect material that was being put together by some member churches about Shell.

Responding to a question about the effect of the Sokoni Conference on the local Kenyan people, Mr Kobia said there was a conviction that local ecumenism would never be the same again; the methodology used, the inclusiveness, the fact that lay people and women and children felt empowered because they were part of the whole event - was so powerful and had an immediate impact that would not be forgotten. Those who experienced it would carry this methodology to other organisations.

Reflecting about this experience and its implications for the life of the Council, Dr Raiser underlined the fact that this conference was an attempt to bring to life what had been the focus of the activities of Unit III under the title Theology of Life. It was clear that a different language, different forms of expression were needed; and here a different language was taking shape which would help us express dimensions of our ecumenical vision which we could not express elsewhere. He hoped that this process of discovering a different language of poetry, drama, symbols, which communicate even without interpretation, might continue.

Secondly, Dr Raiser expressed the hope that some of this could be captured as we prepare for Harare, because both these conferences had broken new ground. If this were the type of international conference of the future, there was no reason to fear that the next generation would not pick up the ecumenical vision. But such a conference included the challenge to design a new way of communicating and hearing. Perhaps this was only the beginning of trying to understand how such an event could be shared beyond the participants, how it could become a growing point, a source of communicating energy and ideas beyond those directly involved.

The Moderator observed that a new ecumenical criterion seemed to be developing, not only in the WCC but in the ecumenical community, one that aimed at producing the kind of report which everyone can identify with. This criterion was bringing about an ecumenical strategy that aimed at maintaining peaceful co-existence in the ecumenical community. He feared that this might lead to a kind of stagnation rather than taking us a step further in our ecumenical journey. This was a new aspect emerging in our ecumenical togetherness in different parts of the world. He felt that the courage to challenge ourselves, to challenge the churches, was less present in our ecumenical togetherness. In his view, the statement of the Mission Conference was satisfactory, but he had expected something more.

Referring to these two events, held in different contexts and settings, with different

nature and scope, the Moderator expressed the hope that they would not simply be isolated events in the life of the WCC. How could they contribute to the CUV process? What were the implications? Whatever the Council said and did should be seen in the perspective of the CUV process, leading beyond the assembly.

Prof. Aagaard referred to an article published recently in the United States entitled "The next Ecumenical Movement". What she had heard about these two events confirmed her understanding that the next ecumenical movement had begun. There was a reality here which could only dimly be grasped, which could hardly be articulated because the appropriate language was lacking, but which it was necessary to affirm. These two events showed that we have experiences we can point to that overcome dichotomies, and Theology of Life had succeeded in overcoming the dichotomy between emotional events and hard thinking.

Dr Tolen believed that the CWME Message contained hard questions that would be demanding for everyone. If CUV were to reflect on how we understand ourselves, how we see ourselves, the discussion would be less tense. He thought we were already in a new ecumenical setting; we had not been static, we were in movement.

In response to a question about a methodology for reporting on these events to the Central Committee, Dr Kässmann pointed out that people no longer read documents - another methodology must be sought. Poetry and drama seemed more effective than long texts. She suggested the possibility of generating a similar experience by creating an open space, such as the *Padare* at the Assembly, in order to convey the Sokoni experience to Central Committee.

The report was referred to the Programme Sub-committee.

At a later session, Ms Ritchie presented the Sub-committee's report. The Executive Committee noted the following points:

The Sub-committee commended Unit III both for the presentation by Rev. Sam Kobia and for the success of the Sokoni Conference held in Nairobi, Kenya, 12-19 January 1997.

Elements of the methodologies used in both the above conferences should be taken into consideration by the Assembly Planning Committee in order to gain more active participation at the Assembly.

The Programme Sub-committee also made the following observations and recommendations, which the Executive Committee agreed, with regard to other programmes of Unit III, (referred to above):

- a) *The Unit III report on the situation in Nigeria, "Ogoni, the Struggle Continues", was received. The Sub-committee recommended that the report be submitted to the Central Committee in September. The Sub-committee further recommended that the General Secretary contact member churches in order to find out where Shell International's operations were affecting the environment, and where churches were in dialogue with Shell about its responsibility, in order to gather and share information on such activities.*
- b) *The Sub-Committee received from Unit III Commission the final report of the Decade Team Visits, and commended it to the Central Committee and to the churches for their study and follow-up action.*

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C. Advisory Board of ENI

Mr Jan Kok introduced a paper setting out the mandate of the Board of ENI. Dr Kässmann, moderator of the Board, explained that they had worked on this for sometime and it was important that the situation be legitimised. She hoped the four sponsoring organisations (WCC, LWF, WARC, CEC) would take it up seriously.

Dr Tsetsis was prepared to accept the text, but felt that a way should be found to include more news of the activities of the WCC and its member churches. Dr Kässmann pointed out that the editors have the possibility of consulting with the communication officers of the four sponsoring bodies. The Board had discussed this question and concluded that, to have a credible news agency, the editors must be independent.

The General Secretary pointed out that the WCC Press and Information Office handled annually a considerable number of press releases circulated to a wide network of correspondents, which were often picked up extensively by other media. The responsibility for disseminating WCC news lay with the WCC itself.

The text was referred to the Programme Sub-committee.

At a later session, Ms Ritchie presented the report of the Programme Subcommittee. The Executive Committee agreed to the recommendation that the terms of reference for the Advisory Board of ENI be approved as follows:

Advisory Board of ENI

1. There shall be an Advisory Board, composed of one representative of each of the sponsoring organizations, which shall meet at least once a year. The ENI editors and the members of the ENI Steering Group (see below) shall attend, with voice but without vote. The Board may from time to time invite consultants, with special expertise in the field of communication; these also shall have voice but not vote. The Board may meet, at its discretion, in closed session.
2. The Board shall be responsible for overseeing the substance of the work undertaken by ENI (*Fachaufsicht*). It shall consider questions of policy and strategy. It shall receive a report from the editors, and report to the sponsoring bodies. The budget for ENI shall be approved by the Board. The staff of ENI shall be appointed, and their contracts renewed or terminated, by the governing bodies of the WCC, on the recommendation of the Board.
3. Administrative oversight (*Dienstaufsicht*) is the responsibility of the Department of Communication of the WCC. In cases of conflict, the editors may appeal to the Moderator of the Board (see below).
4. Neither form of oversight shall limit the editorial independence of the editors, who are the final arbiters of what shall or shall not be published by ENI.
5. The Board shall elect from within its membership a Moderator, to serve for a period of two years. The post shall rotate between the representatives of the sponsoring organizations.
6. The Moderator shall
 - call meetings of the Board;
 - chair the meetings of the Board;
 - speak on behalf of the Board between its meetings;
 - adjudicate on complaints received by ENI where the complainer is not satisfied by the response of the staff;
 - represent ENI to the general secretaries of the sponsoring organizations;
 - together with the WCC Director of Communication, conduct the annual performance appraisal of the ENI editors.

7. An ENI Steering Group, composed of the Director of Communication (or equivalent staff member) of each of the sponsoring organizations, shall meet regularly between meetings of the Advisory Board.
8. The founding sponsors of ENI are the Conference of European Churches, the Lutheran World Federation, the World Alliance of Reformed Churches, and the World Council of Churches. New sponsors shall be accepted by agreement of at least two-thirds of the Board, and shall commit themselves to contribute annually to ENI 1.5% of their operating budget (with a minimum contribution of Sfr 25,000). Annual contributions may be paid in two instalments, the first instalment by 1 April, the second by 1 September.
9. Sponsoring organizations are expected to recognize ENI as a priority for their own organizations, and to meet their financial commitments to ENI. Where necessary, the Board shall remind them of their responsibilities.
- 10 A sponsoring organization wishing to resign from sponsorship shall give at least 12 months notice of its intention.

D. Draft Agenda for Central Committee, 11-19 September 1997

Consideration was given to the draft agenda for Central Committee, and a number of suggestions were made regarding possible plenary sessions.

The Moderator recalled that an earlier plan for a plenary on Diakonia and the Ethics of Humanitarianism had been postponed; it was felt however that this might be better discussed in the Unit IV Committee.

It was suggested that Unit Committees be asked to include items regarding the Assembly and the CUV early on in their agendas so that their reports on these points could be shared with the General Secretariat Committee. Attention must be paid to ensure adequate coordination.

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During the last session of this meeting, the General Secretary added two further items to the agenda, which are reported on below. They were not discussed in the Programme Sub-committee.

E. Meeting in Antelias, Lebanon, December 1996

The General Secretary introduced an Aide-Mémoire on this meeting, noting that some points had already been raised in this Executive.

The main purpose of this informal dialogue was to explore together perspectives for Orthodox participation in the ecumenical movement of the future. The atmosphere of the discussion was good, and interventions were mainly characterized by their openness and sincerity. It was clear that the importance of such a dialogical process and spirit of openness can contribute to the efforts at confidence-building within the fellowship.

Matters that received particular attention included the following: the CUV document and process; planning for the WCC's Eighth Assembly, and for the Millennium; emerging issues on the WCC agenda (sexual orientation); trends in the wider ecumenical family and their repercussions on the WCC (inclusive language, ordination of women, etc); the WCC as an institution; participation of the Russian Orthodox Church.

Dr Raiser referred in particular to a chapter in the Aide-Mémoire on *Living with differences*, noting that the points made there were important and should be addressed. New divisive issues were emerging as they were brought to the WCC agenda by member churches which consider WCC as a neutral space and a forum from which to seek advice. Knowingly or unknowingly, this placed considerable burden on the fellowship; some churches were not prepared to discuss these issues and did not believe they belonged on the agenda of the WCC or the churches. He pointed out that WCC had no formulated position on these issues, nor did it have the basis for a common position.

How were we to live with such tensions? Was our fellowship dependent on being of one mind on all questions? Must all member churches share the same convictions? On doctrinal questions we believed that consensus was the goal of ecumenical fellowship and that other matters must be "bracketed" if there were no consensus, that the goal of dialogue *is* consensus. On the contrary, dialogue was the "practice of fellowship" in which partners must undergo the discipline of carefully listening to one another. In mutual respect, we can agree to disagree without undermining the fellowship; in fact fellowship can grow as we develop the ability to struggle with one another.

The question of an "ethos" emerged had during discussions at Antelias - this was

a new challenge for us. It showed that our methodology is a political one (decisions taken by majority vote), but this was not in accordance with the nature of our fellowship. The political logic had made it difficult to deal with questions on which decisions could not be taken by vote. A way must be found to deal with this.

A number of issues were noted for further discussion and must be given careful attention. There were no easy answers.

The discussion on the issue of homosexuality was the most sensitive, open and exhaustive one yet held among church leaders in the context of the WCC. The small group of the Joint Working Group (JWG) had reflected on how to address ethically divisive issues, the ethics of life in a wider sense. Their work had been published and offered helpful methodological advice.

Acknowledgement was given to the distinction between basic human/civil rights /pastoral concerns and the question of ethical and moral assessment where we are faced with profound differences. How can we deal with these?

Dr Raiser felt that it would not be possible to avoid the issue of homosexuality at the Assembly. An open space (*Padare*) was envisaged where carefully planned discussion on this might take place. Media interest on this potential conflict area would be high, and the media must not be allowed to exploit these tensions. Participants at the Antelias meeting felt it would be advisable to work out clear guidelines for the Officers of the Assembly as to how to respond. These should be shared with the Business Committee and made known to the participants.

For this purpose, a special post-Central Committee consultation, involving some of its members and others, might be held. The JWG memorandum could help in structuring such a meeting. The resulting materials could be published in the January 1998 issue of *The Ecumenical Review*, along with official statements of WCC member churches which have grappled with the issue. Some Executive members would be called on to help implement this plan, which would be monitored and supervised by the Officers.

The General Secretary expressed his gratitude to the Moderator for having provided the space for this discussion at Antelias.

Discussion

Mr Briggs asked how to secure the kind of culture alluded to above. A wider range of people needed to be aware of what the WCC was doing. He asked the General

Secretary to share a similar report with Central Committee.

Fr. Alfeyev reiterated that the homosexual issue had been the most divisive. In a report by the theological commission of the ROC, involving results of a study done by four theological academies to prepare for a report on participation in the ecumenical movement, two of the most prestigious academies called for withdrawal from the WCC. This issue must not suddenly emerge at Central Committee or the Assembly. He believed this viewpoint was shared by many churches in Africa and Asia.

Prof. Aagaard felt that the General Secretary should include his remarks in his report to the Central Committee. Discussion on ethos and fellowship was important, otherwise, it would be difficult to down-scale the "political" approach to this question. Some of the documents mentioned could also be made available at Central Committee. We should not produce guidelines for the Assembly if we do not have them for Central Committee.

Dr Raiser noted that the *Issues for further discussion* indicated in the Antelias aide-mémoire pertained not only to ethical issues, but also to other areas - theological - where there is no consensus. Perhaps these could be used as "building blocks" so that Central Committee can begin this discussion.

The Moderator said he intended to report to Central Committee on issues that have emerged since the Antelias meeting, in coordination with the General Secretary.

Dr Ariarajah felt that a "*Toronto II*" on the nature of our fellowship was needed. We could not assume that all member churches agree on the basis of our fellowship, especially if we intend to widen our membership (CUV) - this could lead to even more misunderstandings. We were assuming a basis which was not really shared. Member churches need to come together to discuss how to achieve agreement on divisive issues, the abuse of fellowship, and so on.

Bishop Zacharias asked how it could be made clear that the WCC has no position on such matters? Fears and false reports in this area abound. Bishop Talbert felt that the time was right for this discussion. The churches are members of the Body of Christ; when one church hurts, we cannot ignore this.

Dr Tsetsis affirmed the need for strengthening the fellowship. He recalled that there was some lobbying around the Central Committee meeting in South Africa on the issue of homosexuality. If this issue came to the Assembly through the *Padare* as

a deep pastoral concern, fair enough, but there would still be difficulties with the African, Asian and Orthodox churches, especially if theological justification were used. Vigilance and discernment were needed. WCC leadership should instruct those responsible for the Assembly, including staff, not to encourage the issue to surface in a way that might be harmful to the Assembly.

F. Update on plans for the Year 2000

Mr Yorgo Lemopoulos reported on plans for the celebrations of the year 2000. The WCC had facilitated the flow of information between churches and ecumenical partners, particularly those interested in marking the millennium in a special way. The report of the informal meeting organized by the WCC in June 1996 and the orientation provided by Central Committee last September were widely distributed and used. A number of churches and organizations included these documents in their world-wide-web pages, clearly articulating the ecumenical challenge posed by the occasion. The WCC had invited representatives of Christian World Communions, Regional Ecumenical Organizations and a number of other ecumenical partners and representatives of member churches to a second round of sharing in Geneva in May 1997.

The channels of communication with the RCC have been kept open. In preparing the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity, serious consideration was given to the churches' journey towards the millennium; the Ecumenical Commission of the Jubilee Year of the RCC had sent a document to all Episcopal Conferences encouraging them to attend to the ecumenical dimension of the celebrations. The small group appointed by the JWG was planning a meeting in March 1997 to assess the present situation and look for ways to strengthen ecumenical cooperation.

8. MEMBERSHIP MATTERS

A. Applications for full Membership

Dr Ariarajah introduced two applications for membership - from the United Church in Papua New Guinea and the United Church in Solomon Islands.

In November 1996, the former United Church in Papua New Guinea and Solomon Islands was officially dissolved and two independent church bodies came into being: The United Church in Papua New Guinea and The United Church in Solomon Islands.

This action was the result of considerations conducted in mutual consultation which had led to the conclusion that the existence of one United Church covering two independent states should no longer be maintained.

The two United Churches at their last General Assembly in November 1996 resolved to seek recognition and continuation of membership with the World Council of Churches. The United Church in Papua New Guinea has a membership of about 600,000 and the United Church in Solomon Islands a membership of about 45 000.

B. Organisations in Working Relationship

Reference was made to Rule XIV: International Ecumenical Organisations, approved by the Central Committee in September 1995.

Applications coming under this new Rule had been received from:

a) DIAKONIA World Federation of Diaconal Associations and Diaconical Communities

DIAKONIA, which has its headquarters in Berlin, Germany, was founded in 1947. It has 48 member associations in four regions: Americas and the Caribbean, Asia-Pacific, Africa, and Europe. DIAKONIA has had a long-standing working relationship with the former Division of Interchurch Aid, Refugee and World Service, later CICARWS and now Unit IV "Sharing and Service".

b) Organisation of African Instituted Churches (OAIC)

The OAIC was founded in 1978 in Cairo at a conference of African Instituted Churches held at the invitation of H.H. Pope Shenouda. A second conference held in 1982 required member bodies to be trinitarian, based on the Old and New Testaments and confessing Jesus Christ as Lord and Saviour. The OAIC is a continental Christian communion with a membership of over 140 churches and several national councils of independent churches. Its offices are in Nairobi, Kenya.

From its beginning the OAIC has had working relationships with several parts of the World Council: with the Programme on Theological Education (now ETE), the former Sub-unit on Renewal and Congregational Life, and more recently with the Office of Church and Ecumenical Relations.

The above applications were referred to the Staffing and Nominations Sub-committee for study and recommendation.

At a later session, Dr Nababan reported on behalf of the Staffing and Nominations Sub-committee. On recommendation of the Sub-committee:

- the Executive Committee agreed to recommend to the Central Committee that the United Church in Papua New Guinea and the United Church in Solomon Islands be recognised as churches in full membership with the World Council of Churches.

- the Executive Committee agreed to recommend to the Central Committee that DIAKONIA World Federation of Diaconal Associations and Diaconical Communities and the Organisation of African Instituted Churches be recognised as International Ecumenical Organisations in working relationship with the World Council of Churches.

9. REPORT OF STAFFING AND NOMINATIONS SUB-COMMITTEE

His Holiness Aram I moderated a closed session on Friday 14 February 1997. He invited Dr Nababan to present the report of the Staffing and Nominations Sub-committee.

STAFFING REPORT

The Executive Committee authorised the General Secretary to proceed with the following appointments and contract extensions, the legal obligations of the World Council of Churches to be binding only as from the actual signing by both parties of the corresponding contracts. (Text approved by Central Committee, Geneva, January 1987)

1. Appointments

GENERAL SECRETARIAT

Finance and Administration

- Mr Robert Christeler (Switzerland, Swiss Protestant Church Federation) as Executive Director for Finance and Administration for four years from an agreed date

2. Ratification of Appointment by the Officers at their meeting in December 1996:

GENERAL SECRETARIAT - Ecumenical Institute, Bossey

- Dr Heidi Hadsell (USA, Presbyterian Church [USA]) as Director for four years from an agreed date

3. Contract Extensions

All recommendations marked with * are provisional and should be reviewed in September 1997.

Unit I

- **Rev. Prof. Dr Thomas FitzGerald** (USA, Ecumenical Patriarchate, Archdiocese of America [Eastern]) Executive Director, for 6 months from 1 July 1998 (will complete 4 years 6 months' service)
- **Mr John McVie** (UK, Church of Scotland) Finance Officer, for 9 months from 1 April 1998 (will complete 20 years 6 months' service) *
- **Dr Judo Poerwowidagdo** (Indonesia, Javanese Christian Churches in Central Java) Executive Secretary, for 4 months from 1 September 1998 (will complete 8 years 4 months' service)

Unit II

- **Rev. Samuel Ada** (Togo, Evangelical Presbyterian Church of Togo) Executive Secretary for Evangelism - the decision of the Officers in May 1996 to extend Mr Ada's contract for 1 year to be amended to an extension for 6 months only from 1 September 1997 (will complete 4 years 6 months' service)
- **Rev. Ana Langerak** (USA, Lutheran Church in Costa Rica) Executive Director, for 6 months from 1 July 1998 (will complete 5 years 6 months' service) *
- **Ms Teny Pirri-Simonian** (Lebanon, Armenian Apostolic Church [Oriental]) Executive Secretary for Christian Education, for 6 months from 1 July 1998 (will complete 12 years' service) *
- **Fr Dr Ioan Sauca** (Romania, Romanian Orthodox Church [Eastern]) Executive Secretary for Orthodox Studies and Relationship in Mission, for 3 years from 1 June 1998 (will complete 7 years' service)

Unit III

- **Rev. Dwain Epps** (USA, Presbyterian Church [USA]) Executive Secretary, Public Issues/International Affairs, for 2 years from 1 August 1998 (will complete 8 years 7 months' service)
- **Ms Aruna Gnanadason** (India, Church of South India) Executive Secretary Women, for 3 years from 1 June 1998 (will complete 10 years' service)
- **Rev. Samuel Kobia** (Kenya, Methodist Church in Kenya) Executive Director, for 2 years from 1 September 1998 (will complete 7 years' service)
- **Mr Michel Monjol** (France, Roman Catholic Church) Finance Officer, for 9 months from 1 April 1998 (will complete 20 years 6 months' service) *

Unit IV

- **Mr Alexander Belopopsky** (UK, Ecumenical Patriarchate of Constantinople [Eastern]) Executive Secretary for Europe, for 3 years from 1 February 1998 (will complete 5 years' service)
- **Rev. Myra Blyth** (UK, Baptist Union of Great Britain) Executive Director, for 3 years from 1 June 1998 (will complete 13 years 3 months' service)
- **Mr John Doom** (French Polynesia, Evangelical Church of French Polynesia) Executive Secretary for the Pacific, for 1 year from 1 January 1998 (will complete 10 years' service)
- **Ms Barbara Maubach** (FRG, EKD [Lutheran]) Executive Secretary for Scholarships, for 4 months from 1 September 1998 (will complete 4 years 4 months' service) *
- **Dr Helene Moussa** (Canada, Coptic Orthodox Church [Oriental]) Executive Secretary for Uprooted People, for 5 months from 1 June 1998 (will complete 4 years 5 months' service)
- **Dr Kyung Seo Park** (Korea, Presbyterian Church in the Republic of Korea [PROK]) Executive Secretary for Asia, for 2 years from 1 April 1998 (will complete 18 years' service)
- **Mr Patrick Taran** (USA, Society of Friends General Conference) Executive Secretary for Migration, for 6 months from 1 July 1998 (will complete 8 years 6 months' service) *
- **Mr Francis Muhungi Kanyoro** (Kenya, Evangelical Lutheran Church in Tanzania) Director, ECLOF, for 2 years from 1 April 1998 (will complete 11 years 2 months' service)

*GENERAL SECRETARIAT**Office of the General Secretary*

- **Ms Jeanne Becher** (USA, The Episcopal Church [Anglican]) Assistant to the General Secretary, for 2 years nine months (until retirement) from 1 April 1998 (will complete 21 years 2 months' service)

Ecumenical Institute, Bossey

- **Dr Beate Stierle** (FRG, EKD [Lutheran]) Tutor/Executive Secretary, for 4 months from 1 September 1998 (will complete 7 years 4 months' service)

Church and Ecumenical Relations

- **Ms Jean Stromberg** (USA, American Baptist Churches in the USA) Director, US Office, for 3 years from 1 September 1998 (will complete 17 years' service)

Interreligious Relations

- **Dr Tarek Mitri** (Lebanon, Greek Orthodox Patriarchate of Antioch and All the East [Eastern]) Executive Secretary, (Christian-Muslim and Traditional Religions), for 3 years from 1 May 1998 (will complete 10 years' service)

Communication Department

- **Mr Jan Kok** (Netherlands, The Reformed Churches in the Netherlands) Director, for 8 months from 1 May 1998 (will complete 25 years 8 months' service) *
- **Rev. John Newbury** (UK, Methodist Church) Press and Information Officer, for 6 months from 1 July 1998 (will complete 5 years 6 months' service) *

Finance

- **Ms Margaret Reid** (UK, Church of England [Anglican]) Deputy Chief Accountant, for 3 years from 1 April 1998 (will complete 11 years 7 months' service)

Office for Income Coordination and Development

- **Mr Günter Rath** (FRG, EKD [Lutheran]) Director, for 2 years from 1 June 1998 (will complete 10 years' service)

Personnel Department

- **Rev. Carlos Sintado** (Argentina, Evangelical Methodist Church of Argentina) Director, for 2 years from 1 July 1998 (will complete 19 years 6 months' service)

Library

- **Mr Pierre Beffa** (Switzerland, Roman Catholic Church) Director, for 3 years from 1 September 1998 (will complete 35 years 2 months' service)

4. Vacancy

Unit IV - Appeals Officer, ACT

The Executive Committee authorised the Officers to declare any vacancy as may be needed before the next meeting of the Executive Committee.

5. Information

a) Arrivals

It was reported that the following staff members would take up, or had taken up, their appointments on the dates indicated:

GENERAL SECRETARIAT

Ecumenical Institute, Bossey

- **Father Serapio Kabazzi-Kisirinya** (Uganda, Roman Catholic Church) Professor, on 16 September 1996.

Unit III

- **Mr Freddy Knutsen** (Norway, Church of Norway) Executive Secretary, Youth, on 6 January 1997.

b) Departures

It was reported that the following staff members had left, or would leave, the service of the World Council of Churches on the dates indicated:

Unit I

- **Rev. Ofelia Ortega-Montoya** (Cuba, Presbyterian-Reformed Church in Cuba) Executive Secretary, on 31 March 1997 (will complete 11 years 7 months' service)

Unit II

- **Rev. Dr Christopher Duraisingh** (India, Church of South India) Executive Secretary, Gospel and Culture, on 31 May 1997 (will complete 7 years 9 months' service)
- **Dr Erlinda Senturias** (Philippines, United Church of Christ in the Philippines) Executive Secretary, Health, on 31 July 1997 (will complete 8 years' service)

Unit III

- **Ms Thembisile Majola** (South Africa, Church of the Province of Southern Africa [Anglican]) Executive Secretary for Women and Development, on 31 July 1997 (will complete 4 years' service)
- **Dr Deborah Robinson** (USA, Progressive National Baptist Convention Inc.) Executive Secretary, Racial Justice Issues, on 31 January 1997 (completed 4 years 1 month's service)

- **Mr Robert van Drimmelen** (Netherlands, The Reformed Churches in the Netherlands) Executive Secretary, Economic Issues, on 30 April 1997 (will complete 14 years 3 months' service)

c) Consultants

It was reported that the following consultants were appointed by the General Secretary since the last Executive Committee meeting in September 1996:

Unit II

- **Sister Elizabeth Moran** (UK, Roman Catholic Church) Roman Catholic Consultant, on 1 January 1997.

Unit IV

- **Mr William Temu** (Tanzania, Roman Catholic Church) Round Table Consultant, for one year from 11 December 1996.

It was reported that the following consultants had left, or would leave, the service of the World Council of Churches on the dates indicated:

Unit II

- **Dr William Cook** (Argentina, Methodist Church in Brazil) Consultant, Conference on World Mission and Evangelism, on 30 April 1997 (will complete 2 years 1 month's service)

- **Sister Monica Cooney** (Aotearoa/New Zealand, Roman Catholic Church) Roman Catholic Consultant, on 31 December 1996 (completed 7 years' service)

- **Dr Eva Ombaka** (Tanzania, Evangelical Lutheran Church in Tanzania) Technical Adviser on Pharmaceuticals, on 30 June 1997 (will complete 5 years 6 months' service)

Unit III

- **Ms Donnalie Edwards** (Antigua and Barbuda, Church of the Province of the West Indies [Anglican]) Consultant, Youth, on 31 March 1997 (will complete three years 2 months' service)

- **Ms Nicole Fischer** (Switzerland, Swiss Protestant Church Federation) Consultant, Mid Decade, on 28 February 1997 (will complete 11 years 11 months' service)

10. REPORT OF THE FINANCE SUB-COMMITTEE

At an early session of the Executive Committee, Ms Birgitta Rantakari, moderator of the Finance Sub-committee, presented the first part of the FSC report as follows:

1. 1996 position

Rev. Michael Davies had reported that the books in Geneva had only closed the previous week so no definite figures were yet available. The signs were a little more encouraging than they had been at the special FSC meeting in March 1996. Investment portfolios had not diminished as greatly as had been expected by the end of 1996, despite the fact that the overdraft had been reduced from CHF 20m to below CHF 1m in the year. Exchange rates against the Swiss franc had improved greatly in the past three months and OICD reported that income was coming in at a slightly higher rate than anticipated earlier.

2. 1997 budget

After incorporating the decisions taken in September 1996 there were two outstanding areas. No further material contributions had been received towards the staff re-structuring fund, so this cost would have to be incorporated in the budget in subsequent years. Work was continuing to seek savings in the Central Services area and the consultants involved were hoping that a full re-structuring of Finance and Administration could be accomplished by October 1, when a new Executive Director would take over this new department. On the other side, the improved exchange rates and a slight improvement in income had already covered the anticipated shortfall, so 1997 should balance overall.

3. 1998 and subsequent budgets

The preliminary budget for 1998 (revised in November 1996 in the light of savings effected) showed an adjusted shortfall of under CHF 2m. Detailed work on the budget could not commence until clear criteria were set and this would be a major part of the Sub-committee's work at this meeting.

4. Finance Strategy Working Group

Prof. Anna Marie Aagaard had reported on the work of the FSWG, presenting the minutes of the November meeting and the task list prepared by the Group and annotated by staff. She stressed the importance of the integrated planning process and drew attention to the targets set for this Executive Committee. There was need for an overall financial strategy and the setting of benchmarks for expected income (the Group had suggested CHF 5m for UDI and CHF 15m for General income), which must not be exceeded. Core staffing costs should not exceed 60% of this

so that the remaining staff have money to work with. The Group had insisted on the necessity for a "Budget+" charge of 10% on this income to meet the cost of staff restructuring, training, consultancies, income development and the rebuilding of reserves. She asked about the decision in September to cease 100% subsidising of attendance at Governing Body meetings. At a later point the General Secretary reported that this had met with a positive response.

5. Income projections

Mr Günter Rath had presented his report, noting that Unit II had almost balanced the budget for the mission conference, CHF 7.1m was already pledged or received for the Assembly budget, membership contributions had been a little above budget and the reduction in value of the Swiss franc had helped greatly. He warned, however, of some significant reductions in income (e.g. from EKD) in 1999. He estimated that in 1998 we could count on CHF 6.23m UDI and CHF 15.6m General income.

6. Programme evaluation and prioritisation

Ms Mary Ann Lundy described the process in which the Management Team was engaged, aiming at a conclusion by June 1997, at which time staffing needs for the future would be established and criteria would be available for a unified budget for 1999. Some programmes would terminate in 1998, which would be a transitional year. There must be sufficient staff to handle the Assembly. Meanwhile attention was being paid to comments from regional bodies, etc. and the April Consultation would be an important occasion for consulting agencies and churches.

The General Secretary had drawn attention to the danger of initiating a negative cycle from the legitimate desire to stabilise on projected income. Programme income depended on doing programmes - the proposed April Consultation would be very important here. The programme profile arising from CUV could not be independent of financial support but must not be governed by it - there must be a balance. If cuts were made too radically existing funding would be endangered. There was a good chance of balancing the 1998 budget implicitly containing the direction for 1999.

There was some discussion of staffing policies - whether it would be better to cancel all contracts at the end of 1998 and then reconstitute the staff on the lines required or whether to extend now the contracts of some staff who would definitely be required beyond that time. The principle would be referred to the Officers.

7. April Consultation

This Consultation, to be held in Geneva 23-24 April, had been called by the General Secretary to meet with the main funding partners, agencies and churches, with the aim of involving them in the CUV process and seeking their support for new structures, ways of working and budgeting methods (it would not be a pledging meeting). Their support could not be taken for granted and they needed to feel they were being taken seriously and can "own" the process. Overhead and general WCC costs were the least attractive. They seek a "round table" process, which must be well prepared with programme people fully involved. First indications were that they were positive and willing to cooperate with an "integrated structure", though their needs and mandates must be heard and taken into account.

During a subsequent discussion about the consultation it was agreed that the Moderator suggest further names to the General Secretary. It might be helpful to include participants in the preparation process in some way.

8. Budget process

Mr Davies had them introduced a paper on the budget process, explaining the recommendations of the SEG Finance Group, that:

- a) Budget work should commence immediately after the Executive Committee in line with the criteria decided there, but based on existing Units/Offices and their programmes and on the number of staff (and offices) currently expected to be in place on 1/1/98 (which could be amended as the process continues).
- b) Shared costs should be budgeted but not re-distributed at this stage.
- c) Budgets should be calculated and submitted for Activities and General funds according to recognised streams or programme thrusts, so that a new form of budget could be constructed once there was more clarity on the future structure and way of operating.
- d) This initial draft budget should be prepared by the end of April, giving time for it to be worked on before July.

Mr Davies had spoken of the various models which had been prepared and worked on by the SEG Finance Group, which had in the end favoured one, which reduced staffing costs to 60% of UDI plus General income (almost 100% in the preliminary 1998 budget). This appeared to produce a surplus of about CHF 5m,

so the reduction was probably too high and would be very difficult in an Assembly year, but the basic concept seemed right and it would eliminate other "shared costs", since the balance of these could then be met from UDI and other sources.

In the Sub-committee's discussions the following guidelines were agreed:

- 1) **Exchange rates** must be realistic but not as low as those set in March 1996. These must be agreed at a later session.
- 2) **Budget 1998** must balance, even if it meant staff and programme cuts.
- 3) **Staff restructuring costs** must be met from within the normal budget.
- 4) **Staff contracts** should only be extended beyond the end of 1998 if the General Secretary was sure that those concerned would be required in the period after the Assembly (i.e. into 1999).
- 5) **Budget+ items**, as suggested by the FSWG (§4 above) amounting to say 10% of UDI and General income should be built into the budget.
- 6) **1998 would be a transitional year** and care needed to be taken to ensure resources were available to staff the Assembly adequately and the transition effectively undertaken. (Could any additional staff for the Assembly be funded from the Assembly account?)
- 7) **Income in 1998** should be based on the OICD median projection of UDI CHF 6.23m and General income CHF 15.6m.

In light of these interim conclusions Mr Davies was asked to work on further models taking them into account.

The Moderator expressed appreciation to Finance Sub-committee members and staff for their hard work and commitment to bringing the Council towards a better financial situation.

Mr Davies explained that in retrospect he saw that the Council had been part of a situation that had been evolving over several years which had affected not only the WCC but many church bodies and agencies and other international organisations in Geneva. He paid tribute to the Unit directors, Finance officers and others involved who had worked hard, not without pain, to reduce expenditure levels.

In discussion about the April consultation, a number of points were made:

- it was not a financial consultation (though it would have financial implications); rather it would be about the future of the WCC, in relation to CUV;

- all Units were involved in preparing for it in order to make a good presentation of their current situation;
- the churches and agencies should be seen as partners rather than as donors;
- was there a way to encourage the churches and agencies in a particular area/country to agree a policy vis à vis the WCC?
- the consultation should not be used simply as opportunity to share information - it was important to create the right atmosphere of understanding and trust.

Prof. Aagaard stressed that it was essential for the 1998 budget to be balanced. She reminded members that this Executive had to live with the decision to grant a redundancy package for departing staff which meant an annual deficit of CHF 290,000 for the next five years.

Mr Davies pointed out that a process had been established: after the completion of the programme evaluation in June, the FSWG would meet to consider the figures. Meanwhile a budget would be drawn up with the data available. 1998 would be a transitional year and its budget must be balanced, but not necessarily by reducing staff since it would also be an assembly year and the new structure must be in place by the beginning of 1999. It was necessary for all concerned to find the best way to deal with this process.

For many years the Council had not received sufficient income for its general activities. Programmatic activity could be adjusted in accordance with the resources available from funding partners, but UDI was not sufficient to support the basic infrastructure: this was the dilemma that had to be faced.

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At a later session, Ms Rantakari presented the second part of the report of the Finance Sub-committee. In her introduction she explained that it had not been possible to advance further in building the budget for 1998 as the necessary facts and figures were not available. A meeting of the FSC was planned for 9 July in Geneva, prior to the Finance Strategy Working Group's meeting, to review the budget situation.

9. Unit Directors' comments

Unit Directors had been invited to comment on the budget situation. Ms Langerak (Unit II) said that on balance they favoured the setting of a percentage staff level

approach in place of the former “shared costs”, since it appeared to result in a fairer sharing of resources. Ms Blyth (Unit IV) said that 1998 and 1999 presented different problems and she was concerned about how to deal with the 1998 deficit. She also expressed concern about the concept of centralised financial management and asked that the experience of other organisations be sought. She believed that the Council should move to a better system. The inadequacies of the present Finance Department were discussed and it was felt that it must be strengthened. The Sub-committee held the view that, in 1998, the Council should move towards a unified accounting system in preparation for 1999.

10. Budget 1998

As requested, Mr Davies had presented several models for a unified budget in 1998. It would clearly not be easy in 1998 to find a middle path between reducing costs to balance the budget and maintaining sufficient resources to run the Assembly and carry through the organisational changes arising from the CUV process. He demonstrated various scenarios taking different percentages of income and for staffing costs and for the proposed “Budget plus” fund, which would be used for amortising the staff restructuring costs, staff training, income development, consultancies, and the rebuilding of reserves.

The Finance Sub-committee made the following recommendations which were approved by the Executive Committee:

1) that staff be asked to prepare a revised budget for 1998 based on existing programmes and data, but adapted as far as possible in line with envisaged changes and developments, leading to a fully unified budget in 1999. Budgets should be calculated for Activities and General funds according to recognised streams or programme thrusts, so that a new form of unified budget could be constructed when appropriate.

2) The following guidelines should be taken into account:

a) “Budget Plus” - a first charge be made on UDI and General income for a new “Budget+” Fund, from which the Council would meet the cost of staff restructuring and training, consultancies (non-staff) and advice, income development (including OICD) and rebuilding reserves. It was envisaged that this should be at a rate of 10% eventually, but that a rate of 6% be taken in 1998. The allocation of this fund each year to be made by the General Secretary and reported to the Finance Sub-committee.

- b) *Exchange rates* - for 1998 budget purposes these be calculated at US\$ = CHF 1.35, DEM = CHF 0.85, SEK = CHF 0.20, other rates to be established by staff. Finance staff were also asked to keep a rolling average of the main exchange rates, commencing on 1 January 1997 and the Finance Subcommittee at its next meeting would review whether to change exchange rate policy, based on the suggestion of the Investment Advisory Group to use a rolling two year average. In future the exchange rate for Dutch Guilders would also be established and the Exchange Equalisation Reserve may then be used for all four established rates from 1997. When General fund income comes in above the budget rate, 50% of the excess be credited to the Reserve.
- c) *Staffing costs* - a set percentage of UDI and General Income would be credited to a Staff Costs Fund, from which all staffing costs would be met. It was understood that the General Secretary would decide on staffing numbers and the allocation of this fund according to the needs of the Council. It was envisaged that the ideal percentage allocation should be not more than 66%, but in 1998 the rate should be not more than 80%.
- d) *Income* - should be based on the OICD median projection (UDI CHF 6.23m and General income CHF 15.6m). Detailed budget figures should be agreed by staff and any variation to the OICD median figure reported to the Finance Sub-committee.
- e) *Remuneration* - there would be no step increases or inflation adjustment in 1998.
- f) *Inflation* - on non-staffing expenditure to be taken in at the rates currently estimated.
- g) *Interest* - from 1998 until further approved by the Finance Committee, investment income (other than income on Endowment Funds and, for 1997 and 1998, income on the Assembly Fund) be used to increase Unit Funds and General Reserves and not to balance revenue expenditure. Investment income in excess of 4% in any year from 1997 be set aside in an Investment Income Equalisation Reserve (up to a maximum of CHF 5m) and that, if investment income were to fall below 3% in any year after this Reserve has been created, it could be topped up to that level from the Reserve. Interest on the Reserve to be credited to the Reserve.

3) that this budget be prepared for presentation to Central Committee in September 1997. It was understood that it must be balanced - i.e. that anticipated expenditure in 1998 would not exceed the projected income in the year.

4) The members of the Finance Sub-Committee available would meet in Geneva on July 9, followed by a meeting of the Finance Strategy Group, to advise the General Secretary on matters relating to the budget.

The importance of the use of donor income being traceable was stressed.

11. Review of Income Development Strategy (CC August 1992 Document 7.2). An annotated version of this document, indicating action taken to date, was considered. It was felt that the document provided a basic mandate for OICD and that Mr Davies and Mr Rath should provide a brief summary of what had been done and what further action was necessary for the Finance Strategy Working Group in July and the Central Committee in September.

12. Assembly budget

So far income and pledges amounted to CHF 7.1m against a target of CHF 8m. The staff group visiting Harare later in February were asked to review both general and local expenditure carefully and revise the budget accordingly.

13. September Finance meetings

After a review of meetings in 1996 it was agreed that duplication of reporting should be avoided if possible. In view of shortage of time it was agreed that the full Finance Committee be given time to meet as early as possible in the Central Committee (perhaps from 5pm on Wednesday September 10). The Finance Sub-Committee meeting in July could report to the Executive Committee. The Finance Strategy Working Group could meet as necessary during the Central Committee. An opportunity should be afforded for a lunchtime meeting at which CC members could seek more detailed information about the financial situation.

14. Investment Policy

Central Committee in September 1996 approved the revised Investment Policy Guidelines, except that they had referred back the question of whether the level of investment in prohibited areas should be limited to 5% of portfolios rather than 10%. The Investment Advisory Group was consulted about this and, whilst accepting totally the Council's objectives, they indicated that it was extremely difficult for portfolio managers to police investments where a very small proportion of a major company's business lies in an undesirable field and they

asked that the level be kept to 10%. The Sub-committee recommended that this advice be accepted.

The Executive Committee agreed.

15. Investment Advisory Group

The Group continued to meet quarterly. Investment performance in 1996 was very encouraging: Banque Scandinave produced a return of 24.05% on General Fund investments, which closed the year at CHF 12.39m (substantially more than anticipated in March 1996) and the bank overdraft had been reduced from CHF 20m to under CHF 1m. The US dollar portfolio managed by Lombard Odier produced 12.08% and stood at CHF 10.3m. Endowment Funds managed by Pictet et Cie produced 12.98% and stood at CHF 6.43m at the year end.

Regarding membership, one of the proposed members of the Group, Ms Fusco, had withdrawn. The full members of the Group were confirmed as being Mr J. Finn, Mr A. Meilland, Ms R. Weber and Mr R. Zagolin, the latter being the only new member (from the Treasury of the Red Cross). Mr C. Gutowsky remained an associate member (as his bank, but not he personally, was involved in portfolio management for the Retirement Fund).

16. Audit Committee

The auditors' management letter had been received and distributed to the Audit Committee, which would consider it at its next meeting. It was somewhat critical of the Council's systems and controls. Most of their comments were accepted, but because of shortage of qualified finance staff it had not been possible to respond to them as we would wish. This was a matter of concern and must be addressed.

17. Retirement Fund

As a pensioner was now included in the Board as one of the elected "members", there was a vacancy for a member appointed by the Governing Bodies of the Council. It was proposed that Dr George Tsetsis be appointed to this place. It would be helpful to have a member of the Central Committee available to serve on the "local Board", which meets between meetings of the full Board.

Mr Davies explained the concept of "budget plus" referred to in the report. This was to cover the costs of staff restructuring and other items from undesignated income (UDI) and general income. Since there was not sufficient UDI to pay for the necessary services, they had in the past been covered by "shared costs" but they had reached an unacceptable level. Finance staff would draft a budget for 1998 based on

the present staff levels and income projections provided by OICD.

In response to a question by Dr Tolen concerning the budget implications of integration of budgets and programmes, Ms Rantakari said that it was hoped that savings would result but it was too early to quantify them.

On the question of staff training, Mr Sintado said it was important to help staff prepare for change; to continue with information technology development and leadership development. In the past these had been covered on an ad hoc basis but in future such costs should be budgeted for.

"Traceable income", mentioned in the report above, referred to an accounting system that makes clear to donors how their contributions have been spent.

Asked for guidelines on how to finance the future staff restructuring package, it was noted that costs already incurred would have to be amortized, and be part of the budget. For 1998 a decision must be made as to how much of the 6% "budget plus" allocation could be used for this. A large portion had been set aside for costs already incurred.

Responding to the question of how to move towards a unified budget if specific essential information was not available, Dr Raiser reiterated the intention to avoid a situation where finances dictate structure. An integrated WCC in terms of activities, budget, structure and programmes was required, and attempts were being made to move all these processes forward at the same time. Certain programme emphases had to be retained in order to obtain income support.

Mr John Briggs (moderator of the Audit Committee) commented on the Auditors' management letter referred to above, § 16. He explained that the Council had implemented some of the recommendations made by the Auditors in the previous year, but there were not sufficient qualified staff in the Finance Department to implement others. In addition, the introduction of the new accounting system (SCALA) and the problems related to this had made clear that present staff did not possess the skills required to use the new tools. A process was underway to rectify this. Among measures still to be introduced he cited the following:

- consistency of reporting (discrepancy between figures of Unit Finance Officers and OICD);
- consistency of internal controls;
- explicit treasury policy.

Ms Rantakari gave an assurance that the new executive director of the Finance and Administration Department would bring the necessary professional skills, and it was hoped that the outstanding recommendations by the Auditors would be implemented. Mr Briggs noted that the Auditors adhere to internationally recognised commercial accounting standards, not all of which were applicable to the WCC.

Mr Davies added that donors were becoming more demanding about reporting, and this entailed considerable additional work for the finance staff, since the WCC had no internal auditor. These questions were being taken up in the process currently being carried out under the leadership of Ms Lundy.

The Executive Committee received the report of the Finance Sub-committee with appreciation.

11. CLOSING ACTIONS

The Moderator expressed thanks to Archbishop Chrysostomos, Metropolitan Chrysanthos, and Bishop Karyannis of the Church of Cyprus; to the staff of the Kykkos Monastery, for the hospitality extended to participants. He also thanked the Officers, members of the Executive Committee, the General Secretary and staff for their participation.

The meeting was adjourned at 12.30 on Saturday 15 February 1997. As this was earlier than originally scheduled, the Church of Cyprus had arranged an outing to Paphos for the afternoon for all who wished to participate.

ATTENDANCE

| | | |
|-------------|---|--|
| Presidents: | Prof. Dr Anna-Marie Aagaard Bishop Leslie Boseto Ms Priyanka Mendis Rev. Eunice Santana Dr Aaron Tolen | |
| Officers: | His Holiness Aram I Ephorus Dr Soritua Nababan Pastora Nélide Ritchie Rev. Dr Konrad Raiser | (Moderator) (Vice-Moderator) (Vice-Moderator) (General Secretary) |
| Members: | Mr John Briggs Rev. Dr Margot Kässmann Very Rev. Leonid Kishkovsky Ms Maryssa Mapanao-Camaddo Ms Birgitta Rantakari Bishop Melvin G. Talbert Very Rev. Dr Georges Tsetsis Rt Rev. Dr Zacharias Mar Theophilos | |
| Apologies: | Bishop Vinton R. Anderson Dr Marion Best Metropolitan Daniel of Moldavia and Bukovina Ms Virginia Gcabashe Rt Rev. Drexel Gomez Metropolitan Kirill of Smolensk Ms Beatrice Odonkor Rt Rev. Dr J. Henry Okullu Rev. Valamotu Palu His Holiness Pope Shenouda | |
| Substitute: | Ms Tungane Williams | |
| Consultant: | Fr Hilarion Alfeyev | |

Observers: His Grace Bishop Basil Karayannis
Metropolitan Chrysanthos of Limassol
Ms Afaf Deeb-Kandis (MECC - Lebanon)

Staff: Rev. Dr S. Wesley Ariarajah
Ms Jeanne Becher
Rev. Myra Blyth
Rev. Michael Davies
Rev. Dwain Epps
Ms Salpy Eskidjian
Rev. Dr Thomas FitzGerald
Ms Aruna Gnanadason
Rev. Samuel Kobia
Mr Jan Kok
Rev. Ana Langerak
Mr Georges Lemopoulos
Ms Mary Ann Lundy
Mr Günter Rath
Fr Dr Ioan Sauca
Rev. Carlos Sintado
Ms Jean Stromberg
Mr Marlin VanElderen

Minute-writer: Ms Rosemary Green

Administration: Ms Ursula Zierl

MEMBERSHIP OF SUB-COMMITTEES

Sub-committee on Staffing and Nominations

| | |
|----------------------------|-----------|
| Ephorus Dr Soritua Nababan | Moderator |
| Dr Marion Best | (absent) |
| Mr John Briggs | |
| Ms Virginia Gcabashe | (absent) |
| Bishop Drexel Gomez | (absent) |
| Metr. Kirill of Smolensk | (absent) |
| Rev. Valamotu Palu | (absent) |

Sub-committee on Finance

| | |
|-----------------------------|-----------|
| Ms Birgitta Rantakari | Moderator |
| Prof. Anne-Marie Aagaard | |
| Bishop Vinton Anderson | (absent) |
| Very Rev. Leonid Kishkovsky | |
| Ms Maryssa Mapanao-Camaddo | |
| Bishop Henry Okullu | (absent) |
| Rev. Eunice Santana | |
| Bishop Melvin Talbert | |

Sub-committee on Programme

| | |
|---------------------------------|-----------|
| Rev. Nélide Ritchie | Moderator |
| Bishop Leslie Boseto | |
| Metr. Daniel of Moldavia | (absent) |
| Dr Margot Kässmann | |
| Ms Priyanka Mendis | |
| Ms Beatrice Odonkor | (absent) |
| H.H. Pope Shenouda | (absent) |
| Dr Aaron Tolen | |
| Dr Georges Tsetsis | |
| Bishop Zacharias Mar Theophilos | |

